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CYSE 368

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Virginia Air and Space Science Center

Reflection #1

Introduction

I have finally completed the first 50 hours of my cybersecurity internship placement through ODU. I have had struggles with finding the time and opportunities to actually accumulate work hours due to my prior obligations; the ODU swim team had practices twice a day each day of the week, with my afternoon practice being at 1PM. With the Virginia Air and Space Science Center being at least a thirty minute drive from my house, this meant that I had to leave by 12:30 at the latest in order to be back on campus for practice. Additionally, my class schedule prevented me from shifting the practice schedule.

Scheduling

This internship is very relaxed in terms of scheduling. In past jobs that I have worked (mostly lifeguarding jobs), there was a hefty, rigorous training requirement before employment, and my hours were determined by managers well in advance without much adaptability. Conversely, this internship is very flexible - the museum operates

mostly through volunteers who may come and go as they please, with the main driver of my hours being the 150 hour (or 100 hour + interview) requirement for CYSE368.

During the swim season I could only manage a two hour session once or twice a week, as my additional obligations meant I needed to remain on campus the majority of my time. I additionally had two full weeks where I was in Florida, neither of which coincided with spring break. Due to my major need for hours, I worked the latter half of spring break at the museum, logging around 3 hours a day. Since then, I've been working all five days of the week, doing three hour shifts.

The Work

The work that I do at the Virginia Air and Space Science Center is varied, but I do have my gripes. I am a student in cybersecurity, so my original hope would be that my internship placement through the school would teach me more about the field of cybersecurity and what my job after graduation would likely be - I wanted something that would give me the confidence to enter the real world of employment in cybersecurity. What I instead am receiving is a more altruistic, volunteering type of employment with a center designed around teaching inquisitive youth about space and humanities' attempts to breach new frontiers. I will say that I am grateful for the opportunity to work with the center, and that it will be a great addition to my resume, regardless of its direct relevance to my chosen degree.

I have so far been assigned to two manual projects of note. The first of which was assembling premade kits for a model rocket launch activity provided to children of partnered schools. This involved inventorying bags with rocket chassis, making precise incisions on the payload and attaching a small metal rod, inserting the fuses into the

payloads, and ensuring that all relevant materials could be found within each completed kit. This was a large, laborious task, but I made it simpler by separating the task into a few separate tasks and spending each day on one specific task. For example, there were days where I would check in, enter my workstation and solely work on inserting fuses into payloads. There were other days where I'd be making incisions on the rocket chassis to allow attachment of the payloads. The second major project I have been assigned recently is inventorying a large amount of LEGO spike kits. These kits, when assembled, can be made into a car with three types of sensors, two distinct motor types, and can interface with an iPad via a cable. I am accomplishing this task by first emptying the currently worked kit onto a table or into a bin before manually counting out each individual piece as designated by the information sheet included in the kit. I have been doing this for the past week and a half, completing nine kits with three more to complete.

I was also used for manual labor a few times. The first time was in moving 900 pounds of books from a second floor storage vault into the room where my "workstation" is set up. I was supplied with a cart and given free rein to move sixteen boxes of books, which took between twenty and thirty minutes. Additionally, there was an event in which the new Tuskegee exhibit was being unveiled for higher-ups at NASA, and the managers at the facility asked me to assist in moving twelve stacks of wooden chairs using a dolly.

Finally, just today I was employed in guiding groups of 6th graders in tours around the facility. This involved three groups of children with separate 50 minute tours. The children were given bingo style cards requiring them to locate textual items such as a

title, a pie chart, a chronological timeline, etc. My task was to assist the chaperones in ensuring that we had no stragglers as well as to determine the most efficient path for us to take in order to cover each exhibit with ample time to learn and converse.

Skills Required

The main skills required so far have been manual dexterity, as I have worked mostly with small scale rocket models as well as with lego sets. This monotonous work has also made it important for me to hone my skill in focusing, as inventorying the lego kits sometimes requires me to count up to the upper double digits (one such item requires 72 small black pins). I also require social skills as the museum employs both other college students, older volunteers known as docents, as well as certain volunteers who are neurodivergent and require additional patience. My supervisor occasionally asks me to assist with training new volunteers or supervising groups in the facility, which require patience and politeness on my part.

Conclusion

The past few months have been rewarding although the work I could complete has been sparse. Now that I am retired from swimming, I am doing three hour shifts each day, with more availability when they need me as well. My supervisor has told me that I may get the opportunity to shadow Curtis, who is the facilities' tech manager (specifically in setting up and maintaining the exhibits computers and iPads, if I recall correctly). This is not a guarantee, but it would be very fulfilling for me to see a side of the facility which is more in line with my major, so I am hoping that this opportunity comes to fruition. I'll also be doing the interview option for reflection 2, and if I do get to

shadow Curtis then he will likely end up being my interviewee (as long as he is agreeable to it).